TL5910

INDEPENDÊNCIA
para
TIMOR - LESTE

MOVIMENTO CRISTÃO PARA A PAZ

Xavier Peres de Cuellar
Secretary General
Room S - 3800 A
UN Secretariat
NEW YORK
NY 10017

Coimbra, 26th May 1989

EAST TIMOR AND THE UN POPULATION AWARD TO GENERAL SUHARTO

Dear Sir,

Christian Movement for Peace is an international youth exchange organisation, which this year is campaigning to bring to the attention of its mambers and the wider public the forgotten tragedy of East Timor, more than one-third of whose population have died either directly or indirectly as a result of the Indonesian invasion of their country on 7th December 1975.

It is therefore with deep regret and concern that we learn that General Suharto of Indonesia is to rceive the UN Population Award in New York on 8 June. We strongly protest against the award being given to General Suharto, and believe there are clear and powful reasons why he should not receive it.

More than 200 000 East Timorese have died as a result of Indonesian aggression since 1975. This fact alone should be sufficient to ensure that General Suharto is internationally condemned, rather than praised for his "important work and international influence in population". However, what is even worse is that the same United Nations, which rejects and condemns Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor, should be the donor of such an award.

Secretariado Nacional R. Cidade de Poitiers nº. 44 1º.
Monte Formoso
P-3 000 COIMBRA
Tel. 039-34217

Indeed, Christian Movement for Peace would like to remind the United Nations of its responsability to oversee the decolonisation of East Timor. Bishop Belo wrote to you on 6 February 1989 expressing the need to commence this process with a plebiscite. We respect Bishop Belo's demand, and ask the United Nations to take the appropriate action to oversee East Timor's self-determination.

Besides the massacre oh thousands of East Timorese by the Indonesian armed forces, General Suharto has implemented an enforced family planning programme, which not insults only the Catholic beliefs of the people, but is being used as a method of controlling the population for political reasons. There is evidence that women in Dili have been sterilised even without their knowledge, the Indonesian family planning officers passing off the notorious and dangerous Depo-Provera injectable contraceptive as anti-tetanus jabs. The World Bank, which supports the family planning programme in East Timor, expects the decision regarding birth control to be made by the individual. Such is not the case in East Timor.

The reasons why we argue that General Suharto should not receive the UN Population Award do not finish with the disturbing case of East Timor. More than half a million people throughout Indonesia were killed when he came to power in 1965. Besides this, and the slaughter of the Timorese, thousands of West Papuans have also been killed whilst opposing the Indonesian colonisation of their country.

Birth control has been used by General Suharto as a means of territorial control, limiting the indigenous populations of West Papua and East Timor, and repopulating these rebellious areas with Javanese transmigrants who dispossess the local inhabitants of livelihood, income and land. Birth control and transmigration are two sides of the same coin.

The means of the implementation of the birth control programme, as in Timor, has paid scant regard to the feelings of the women involved. More often than not, injectable methods of contraception are used in order to cheaply and effectively sterilise large numbers of women, without regard to their own feelings or state of health.

These are clear reasons, we believe, why General Suharto should not receive the UN population award. We call for the withrawl of the award to him, and repeat our deep concern over the matter. Instead, we join with Bishop Belo and call on the United Nations to commence the decolonisation of East Timor with a plebiscite for the East Timorese people.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Teresa Hunter